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Farm Bill@usda.gov

In a recent Doane's Focus Report several questions were raised during the July 7th forum held in Nashville, Tennessee. I have selected a few of these for response.

1. U. S. competitiveness

Research and development should be concentrated in the areas resulting in the greatest benefit to the greatest number.

2. Distribution of program benefits

They should be based on the farm ownership directed toward efficiency, productivity, and growth.

3. Focus on environment, conservation

Establish voluntary incentive programs to reach desired results.

4. Expansion of U. S. agricultural markets, products and research

Research and development concentrated in the areas resulting in the greatest benefit to the greatest number.

5. Factory farming

Larger farming operations are a by-product of global competitiveness. They should be encouraged in all areas to meet the challenge.

6. Distribution of program benefits

The current system of benefits is designed to stabilize prices and income and rewards productivity. This is working and should not be changed.

7. Limits wanted on 1031 exchanges

There should be no limits on the value of exchanges. The market determines value and has worked well since the law was enacted.

CONCLUSIONS

The current farm bill has performed well since its inception at well below the anticipated cost and well below the previous methods of bail-out funds required in previous years. U. S. agriculture remains in a relatively sound financial condition but caution must prevail to avoid a 1980's crunch. Foreign governments, unfair practices remain a

formidable threat to our ag economy, particularly cotton, sugar and rice. Job losses in textiles alone are approaching 1 million, if not already reached or surpassed, with little commentary. Agriculture should not fall into the same category as oil, where our dependency on foreign sources is approaching 65%.

I certainly appreciate your serious consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

THOMAS K. ARMSTRONG
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